

JENNIFER WEXTON  
10TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

COMMITTEE ON  
FINANCIAL SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE,  
AND TECHNOLOGY

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-4610

WASHINGTON OFFICE  
1217 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-5136

STERLING OFFICE  
21351 GENTRY DRIVE, SUITE 140  
STERLING, VA 20166  
(703) 234-3800

WINCHESTER OFFICE  
100 NORTH LOUDOUN STREET  
SUITE 120  
WINCHESTER, VA 22601

April 6, 2020

The Honorable Eugene Scalia  
Secretary of Labor  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20210

Secretary Scalia,

I write today regarding the Peace Corps and other national service programs and the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program created by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. I urge you to issue guidance clarifying that participants with the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, and other similar programs are eligible to receive unemployment assistance under the CARES Act.

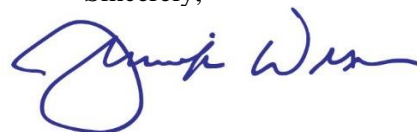
Peace Corps participants represent the best of America in over 100 countries, working to improve the health, education, governance, and economic security of families and communities around the world. AmeriCorps participants do the same in cities across the United States. Participants receive a monthly stipend for their service abroad. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the Peace Corps has suspended all international operations and evacuated all of its participants back to the United States. These participants are eligible for some readjustment and evacuation allowances but not unemployment assistance, as the Department of Labor has previously determined that this service does not constitute an employer-employee relationship.

Recognizing the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, the CARES Act, which was signed into law by President Trump on March 27, 2020, significantly expanded eligibility for unemployment assistance to include many groups who otherwise would be unable to claim these benefits. For example, individuals whose place of unemployment has been closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic are made eligible, as are independent contractors and gig economy workers despite the lack of an employer-employee relationship in their line of work.

Given that Peace Corps and AmeriCorps participants have had their service suspended due to COVID-19, they should be eligible for the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program under the CARES Act. These individuals selflessly volunteered to help others abroad but were forced to cut short their plans and travel back home under much duress, and now face great uncertainty about their immediate futures and economic security. I strongly urge you to issue clear guidance regarding the eligibility of these individuals for unemployment assistance under the CARES Act.

I thank you for your consideration and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Wexton  
Member of Congress